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# Drifters Lament

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# DRIFTER'S LAMENT

BY MERCEDES NUNEZ



*The Haunting of Flowers, II, 1998, 38x50" black acrylic, gesso and oil on Stonehenge printmaking paper*

**T**he recent paintings and mixed-media works on paper are an abstract dialogue that embraces the subtleties of experience and the search for home. The work is clouded with melancholy, irrevocably tied to the memories of my childhood in Cuba and the isolation of being exiled. Through an expressionist palette, this dialogue weaves through the connection of my Afro-Cuban religion and heritage while speaking of the felt alienation and fragmentation of modern life.

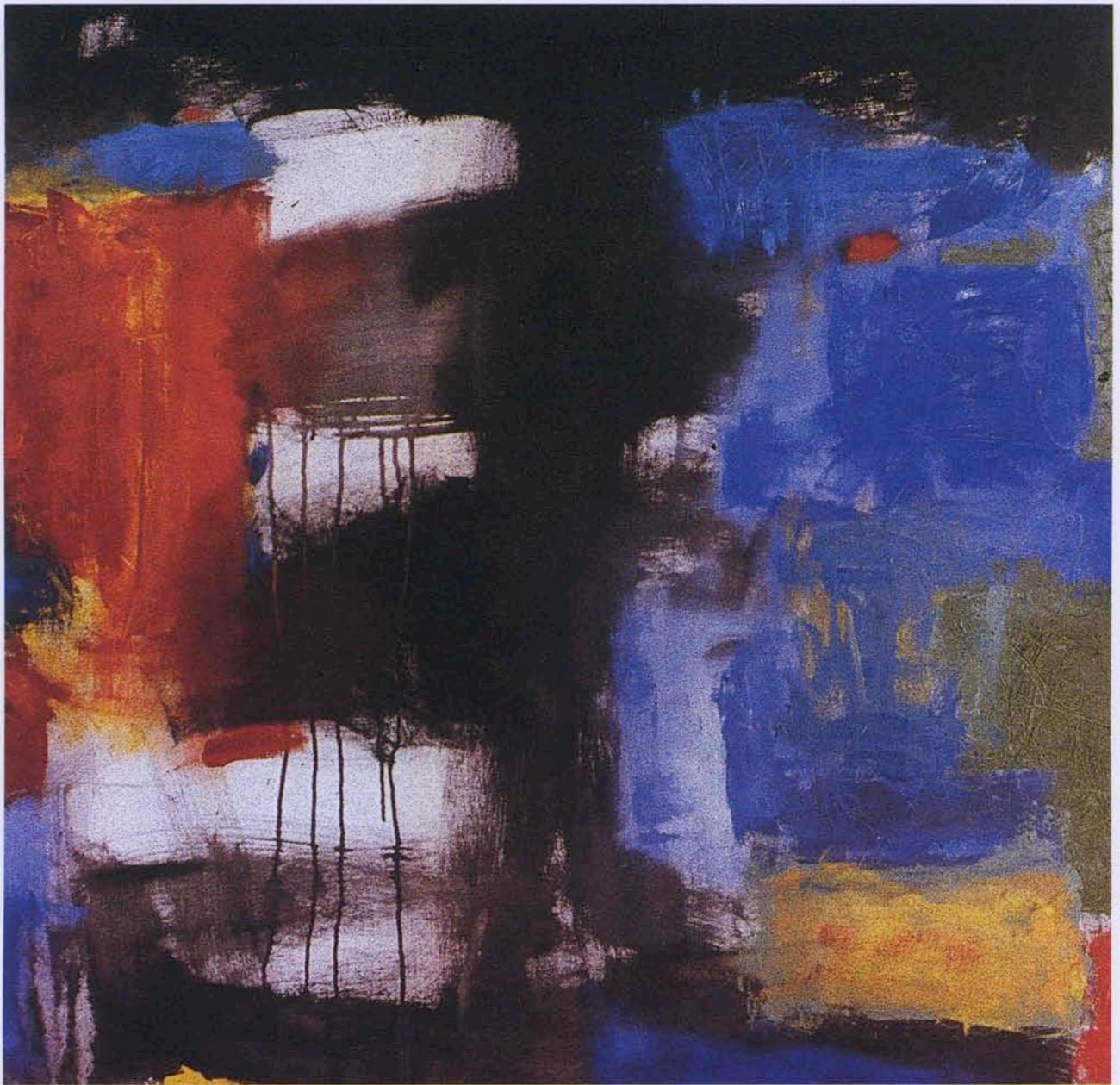




*Revelations*, 1997, 47x32.5" mixed-media/collage: Japanese sumi ink, gesso, watercolor, tissue + rice paper stained with sumi on Arches watercolor paper

The six pieces included here, *The Haunting of Flowers, II*, *Revelations*, *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), *Bitter Tuesday*, *What The Living Do* and *Saint Sebastian* are from a larger series of works that have evolved since my sabbatical year in the winter of 1996. The titles function as departure points, but allow for the viewer's individual discovery and reaction. Each piece conveys its own intimate universe of experience—from *Bitter Tuesday*'s unfolding memories of loss, to the rhythmic hues of the more celebrant *Sendero Luminoso*—yet they also work thematically, exploring and capturing the subtleties in experiences.





*Bitter Tuesday, 1997, 40x40" black acrylic and oil on canvas*

The works on paper begin with an abstract drawing of lines and forms using Japanese sumi ink. This beginning work is layered with textural drawings in gesso, watercolor, and sumi ink stained tissue and rice paper collaged onto the surface. This process allows me to conceal certain forms while creating illusions and mystery. There are also times, in the mixed-media works and the paintings, when the beginning black forms remain pivotal to the overall piece rather than as a point of departure, relying on the simplicity of form.





*What The Living Do, 1998, 37x33" black acrylic and oil on canvas*

The title of this series, *Drifter's Lament*, evokes my own lament at being driven further away from what defines Cuba for me—the people who also emigrated. As those close to me pass on, they take the pieces of the Cuba I knew with them. At times, it is the feeling of being adrift, without a cultural identity or a sense of home—living in the present, while far removed from the past. This series of works is the attempt to connect with the soil in this country; it is a personal dialogue of documenting and defining a moment in time, while experiencing the loss of another moment.





*Saint Sebastian, 1998, 40x28" mixed-media/collage: Japanese sumi ink, gesso, watercolor, tissue+rice paper stained with sumi ink on Arches drawing paper*